Great expectations:

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Abstract (max. 100 words)

This paper reports findings from an evaluation of a national continuing professional development (CPD) programme for teachers in England. Data showed that the localized implementation, opportunities for interactive learning, and 'collective participation' were positive factors. Research participants reported difficulties, however, in 'cascading' knowledge to colleagues and in sustaining and developing their learning. It is argued that these limitations were rooted in an inconsistent theory of learning that underpinned the programme and a failure to conceptualize teachers as 'lead learners' in schools. Wider implications for the design of teachers' professional development are considered.

Key Words: teacher learning, professional development, learning theory, physical education and school sport.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to report findings from the evaluation of an innovative national professional development programme, and to consider wider implications for the design and conduct of teachers' professional development within and beyond physical education. The professional development programme was 'innovative' in that it was designed and monitored nationally, but delivered locally in a newly developed delivery framework to ensure teachers' needs were met. In addition, new features included an attempt to base the design of the programme on research findings on effective CPD; it was made available (free of charge) to all teachers and other adults responsible for curricular and extra-curricular physical education and school sport in English schools; and was subject-based but with stated aspirations to deliver wider school outcomes. The task of the researchers was to find out whether the structures and opportunities provided through the new programme were indeed appropriate to teachers' needs, and whether the ambitious programme aims were achieved. The findings raise questions about the implications of basing professional development design on inconsistent theories of teachers as learners, and on specific and arguably limited understandings of teaching as a profession.

The paper is organised into six sections. In section 1, the policy context is summarised for professional development in teaching and the introduction of the new programme. Section 2 provides an overview of the international research on teacher professional learning. In section 3, a concise overview of the aims, organisation and delivery of the National Physical Education and School Sport Continuing Professional Development (PESS-CPD) programme is provided to orient readers. Section 4 provides detail on the evaluation research design, rationale and process; and in

sections 5 and 6, findings are reported and wider implications for teachers' professional learning discussed.

1. Professional learning in the profession of teaching

Teaching is usually recognised as a profession even though it is not always accorded the same status as some other professions (Hargreaves, Cunningham et al., 2007; Shulman, 2000). As members of a profession, teachers in many countries are bound by professional standards and a code of ethics but, even so, it has been argued that teaching fails to fulfil all the requirements associated with the title 'profession' (Helsby, Knight, McCulloch, Saunders and Warburton, 1997). One of the key characteristics of any recognised profession is practitioners who have both the right and the responsibility to engage in appropriate and effective career-long professional learning (Brunetti, 1998). The reason for this requirement is clear: a profession exists to serve its clients, and a professional practitioner should be able to draw upon best knowledge at any given time to serve clients effectively. It could be argued, therefore, that members of professions are, by definition, lifelong learners. Furthermore, because it is an education profession, it might be reasonable to expect that teaching would be in the vanguard of continuing professional development (CPD) policy and practice; an example from which other professions could learn. To date, however, there is little evidence to suggest that this is the case. Indeed, Borko (2004, p. 4) famously described much existing CPD for teachers as 'woefully inadequate', and this provides an interesting backdrop for the introduction of a new approach to professional development in the national programme at the centre of this paper.

Although the nature, quality and effectiveness of teachers' career-long professional learning remain of concern both nationally and internationally (Wayne,

Suk Yoon et al., 2008) there is recent evidence of an increased awareness of the *importance* of CPD. In Europe, contemporary national policies on education, teacher education and CPD are underpinned by visions of a 'knowledge driven' society in which lifelong learning is a key feature. The vision is that with adequate and sustained support, citizens / employees should develop their capacities to become autonomous and independent learners who are able to be innovative, think critically and creatively, work collaboratively, and take risks (August et al., 2006; European Commission, 2008). In this context, schools and teachers have been identified as 'the single most important asset in the achievement of the vision of a learning society' (Day, 2002, p. 431). If schools are to deliver what seems to be required, however, effective and appropriate career-long professional development for the teaching workforce would seem to be an essential ingredient.

In the context of these international trends, the provision of ongoing, personalised, and tailored CPD opportunities for all teachers in England became a priority under the previous government (Day, 2002; General Teaching Council [GTC], 2007). A national strategy for teacher professional development was instituted (GTC, 2000) and expanded (GTC, 2007) with aspirations to develop the school workforce as part of an integrated approach to improving pupils' lives (August et al., 2006; Training and Development Agency for Schools [TDA], 2007). More recently however, the new Coalition government in the UK has stepped back from the notion of funding national strategies for professional development, preferring instead to let schools take greater responsibility for teachers and their professional development (http://www.education.gov.uk/). This represents an important shift in the ways in which the teaching profession is viewed. It could be argued, for example, that allowing schools to lead professional development is precisely in tune with the international

CPD research suggesting that top-down, mandated and standardised professional development is inadequate for many teachers (e.g. Day and Townsend, 2009). On the other hand, there are concerns that CPD will be a low funding priority for schools and, as Pedder, James and Macbeath (2005) have illustrated, not all schools have the capacity or expertise to become the kind of learning organisation that can support and extend teachers' professional development.

It was in the national policy context of the previous government, between 2000-2009, that the CPD programme at the centre of this paper was established and rolled out. It is important to recognise, therefore, that although the programme designers were keen to base the design of the programme on research findings, and to meet the individual development needs of teachers and schools, there was a strong underpinning philosophy of central government control expressed in the overarching programme aims. This contextual information is important because, as Timperley (2008) argued in a review of teacher learning:

> Professional learning is strongly shaped by the context in which the teacher practises. This is usually the classroom, which, in turn, is strongly influenced by the wider school culture and the community and society in which the school is situated. (p. 6)

The national context in which the new National Physical Education and School Sport Continuing Professional Development Programme (referred to in this paper as the 'National PESS-CPD Programme' or 'the Programme') was established was one of expansion in government spending. The CPD Programme was funded by the UK central government (£35 million) and launched in 2003. It was designed for those responsible for delivering 'Physical Education and School Sport' (referred to as PESS

112 throughout this paper[1]) and it was made available to all relevant teachers (and other
113 adults) in all government funded primary, secondary and special schools (which is the
114 vast majority of schools in England). The aims of the Programme were broad,
115 extending beyond improving pupils' engagement in PESS to include wider
116 educational benefits linked to whole school improvement and increasing physical
117 activity levels for health. The Programme CPD activities were delivered free of charge
118 for teachers, although teacher replacement costs for schools were not covered.
119 Initially, the Programme was planned to run until 2006, but supplementary funding
120 enabled an extension to 2008 and elements of it continue to run today, albeit in a
121 different structural and financial format and without the same national-level
122 monitoring. At the time of writing, it seems unlikely that the current government will
123 continue to support professional development in this format.

124 From January 2004 to March 2008, the authors were commissioned to
125 undertake an evaluation of the National PESS-CPD Programme. The purpose of the
126 evaluation was to explore the complex process of teacher learning and to provide
127 evidence of different forms of impact within and beyond PESS.

128 **2. CPD and PE-CPD Research: Teachers as learners**

129 Although beliefs about the importance of teachers' CPD are not new (Bradley, 1991),
130 in 2000, the UK government of the time placed a renewed emphasis on CPD. This set
131 the tone for much of what followed in the decade, including the Programme that is the
132 focus of this paper. In explaining its conceptualisation of teaching, the government

[1] Physical Education and School Sport – or PESS – is the label used in England to denote curricular and extra-curricular physical education activities and a range of linked school-level sports competitions and opportunities. It is a term that was introduced as part of the previous government's extensive strategy to increase opportunities for physical education and sport in state funded schools.

argued that ‘We need teaching to become a learning profession' and, moreover, stated their belief that it is essential for teachers ‘to feel they own the professional development framework' (DfEE, 2001, p. 2). It was also suggested that teaching could learn something from other professions. Perhaps the key legacy of all the changes, however, was the emerging recognition that teacher learning is a complex and multi-faceted activity that requires a range of different approaches if it is to be effective. In the USA, Guskey (1994; 2002) had made the much repeated comment that there is no single form of CPD that is appropriate for all teachers; what is required is an ‘optimal mix’ of activities that suits particular teachers at different stages in their individual development. Further, Day and Sachs (2004) argued that the prevailing ‘deficit’ model of CPD should be replaced by a model that recognises teachers’ need to engage in continuous learning in school-wide learning communities. Such views from the research community appear to have been influential in CPD policy in England, particularly the notion of developing teacher professional learning communities or networks (Lieberman & Miller, 2008).

As part of the upsurge of interest in CPD for teachers, a whole raft of research on CPD, much of it emerging from the USA, has sought to identify principles or characteristics of ‘effective’ professional development. It has certainly been argued extensively that the traditional CPD model of sporadic one-day ‘courses’ for teachers, disconnected from previous professional learning, and delivered out of the school context, fails to have measurable impact on teachers’ practices (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Day & Sachs, 2004; Elmore, 2002; Fishman et al., 2003; Garet et al., 2001; Loucks-Horsley et al., 2003; Stein et al., 1999). Moreover, as James et al. (2007, p. 63) in their recent research in the UK commented: ‘continuous and progressive professional development will have more lasting value’. Lieberman & Miller (2008, p. 106) after

158 extensive research in the field in the USA, concluded that 'Professional learning
159 communities…hold the promise of transforming teaching and learning for both the
160 educators and students in our schools'. The national PESS-CPD programme designers
161 were keen to take cognisance of the international CPD research findings, and this
162 explains some of the design features that they attempted to put in place (see section
163 3).

164 The research findings on CPD for physical education teachers (PE-CPD) have
165 mirrored the wider CPD research. Just like their colleagues in other areas of the
166 curriculum, PE teachers have long argued that professional development fails to meet
167 their needs. For example, research by Armour and Yelling (2004a, 2004b, 2007)
168 found that PE teachers' CPD experiences were lacking coherence, relevance,
169 challenge and progression. In addition, PE teachers in their research held strong
170 beliefs about the value of learning collaboratively with and from professional
171 colleagues, but were also aware that this form of informal, collaborative learning
172 wasn't viewed as 'real' CPD by their schools. On the other hand, when they attended
173 an official CPD 'course' which required them to abandon their pupils for a day and
174 which could be, ultimately, ineffective, they were often able to count this as CPD by
175 recording evidence of attendance as sufficient evidence of learning (Armour &
176 Yelling, 2007).

177 The findings from the English PE-CPD research were broadly similar to those
178 from other studies around the world. Earlier studies, particularly those from the USA,
179 had found that there was a lack of research on PE-CPD (Fejgin & Hanegby, 1999;
180 Pissanos & Allison, 1996; Schempp, 1993; Stroot, Collier, O'Sullivan, & England,
181 1994; Ward & Doutis, 1999). More recently, research has pointed to the value of
182 professional learning that is active, practical, situated, collaborative,

183 continuing/continuous, capacity-building, reflective, innovative, evolving and that
184 results in teachers becoming autonomous learners (Armour, Makopoulou &
185 Chambers, 2008; Ko, Wallhead & Ward 2006; Makopoulou & Armour, 2011 a; 2011
186 b; O'Sullivan & Deglau, 2006). There is also research that points to some successful
187 PE-CPD initiatives, although in each case barriers to professional learning were also
188 identified (e.g., Deglau & O'Sullivan, 2006; O'Sullivan, 2007; Patton & Griffin,
189 2008). For example, Keay (2006) encountered numerous challenges in trying to
190 establish and sustain effective professional learning communities within physical
191 education settings. Furthermore, just as in the wider CPD literature, there is an
192 enduring concern about the quality of the evidence available on establishing links
193 between teacher professional learning and pupil learning outcomes (Armour, 2006).

194 Teacher professional learning is complex in itself; attempting to make links
195 between a teacher learning activity and specific pupil learning outcomes is more
196 complex still (Timperley, 2008). Evidence from the broader CPD literature shows that
197 significant progress has been made in this direction but much remains to be done as
198 empirical findings are far from conclusive (Desimore, 2009; Garet et al., 2001).
199 Indeed, Guskey and Yoon (2009) argued that 'at this time, we simply have no reliable,
200 valid and scientifically defensible data' (p.498) to support claims made about
201 effective and ineffective CPD strategies. They argue that planners and designers of
202 professional development activities need to take a much earlier and greater interest in
203 evaluation because, as they point out, time and funding for proper pilot studies are
204 rarely available in the rush to 'implement' new professional development
205 programmes.

206 The National PE-CPD Programme at the heart of this research was both
207 ambitious and laudable in its aspirations, yet many of Guskey and Yoon's (2009)

comments apply and the process of engaging researchers was depressingly familiar. The evaluation was commissioned at a point where the design and structure of the programme were already established, with no opportunity or funding for effective pilot research prior to the first roll-out phase. Essentially, the process was as follows: a tender to run a national PE-CPD programme was published by Government. Consortia applied with their ideas for designing and running the programme (within very tight timeframes) and the programme had to be 'rolled out' as promised in the successful bid. It was anticipated that the evaluators would report on progress in all the aims of the programme (see below) although the broad scope of the aims made this improbable.

3. The National PESS-CPD Programme Explained

The National PESS-CPD Programme was designed and managed by a consortium of national professional organisations in physical education and youth sport. It is important to note that this Programme formed part of an extensive government-funded strategy at the time to enhance the quantity and quality of physical education and sport available to children and young people, and to use PESS to deliver wider educational benefits to young people and to increase their physical activity levels.

The National PESS-CPD Programme was unique both in the history of PE-CPD specifically, and CPD more widely in England. The Programme's overarching aims, as expressed in the tender (but with our emphasis), were certainly ambitious:

- Improving the quality of teaching and learning in PE and school sport in order to raise the attainment of all pupils (with 'attainment' being defined broadly);

- Increasing the understanding of the use of high quality PE and school sport in whole school improvement;

- Enhancing the links between high quality PE and school sport and the promotion of physical activity and health;

- Encouraging innovative interpretation of the National Curriculum for PE to ensure it closely meets pupils' needs and ensures their maximum achievement;

- Enhancing cross-phase continuity (between different stages of schooling) to ensure pupil progress

Although designed and managed centrally by the managing consortium, the National PESS-CPD Programme was delivered locally through a network of 150 'Local Delivery Agencies' (LDAs). The Programme centred on a suite of stand-alone 'modules' on a range of different topics. The modules were written by a range of existing CPD providers in physical education (commissioned by the managing consortium) and were then approved (or revised) by a government quango. Some of the modules were designed to be delivered face-to-face by a CPD provider, while others were designed as resource-based modules which teachers could access as required. Examples of module topics include: 'Learning in and through gymnastics /dance/ swimming / games activities'; 'Learning about health and healthy, active lifestyles'; and 'Assessing progress and attainment in PE'. The length of modules varied depending on the topic and the approach taken. Module delivery was monitored against agreed national quality assurance standards set by the managing consortium.

One of the innovative features of the Programme was that prior to engagement, schools and physical education departments were asked to undertake an 'audit of need'

to ensure the most appropriate modules were selected from the available menu. Teachers were also expected to undertake a pre-module task in order to familiarise themselves with the module topic and develop a clear understanding of their individual learning needs. In addition, post-module evaluation was required, including developing an individual action plan, recording evidence of change and disseminating learning to colleagues in a traditional 'cascade' model. It is also worth noting that although the original government tender specified that the new CPD programme should be innovative in order to deliver its ambitious aims, both the managing consortium and the local delivery agencies (LDAs) commissioned to deliver the CPD were largely drawn from existing professional development providers in physical education.

4. The Evaluation Research Design

Borko (2004) argued that in order to understand CPD in action, it is essential to consider all layers of the 'system' under investigation. This paper reports multi-layered data on the nature, quality and relevance of the new CPD opportunities/resources in delivering the programme aims. The decision was taken to place much of the evaluation resource into undertaking multi-layered case studies defined at either the 'school' or 'LDA' level. The rationale for this decision was that the research funding was spread over a number of years, and this provided an exciting opportunity for the researchers to track teacher learning as it evolved.

4.1 Theoretical framework for the evaluation

One of the first tasks for the researchers was to establish a theoretical framework for the evaluation. In the early stage of the process, therefore, the researchers analysed the theories of change (e.g. how and why a Programme is expected to 'work') driving the

Programme and the assumptions underpinning those theories (Anderson, 2004). An analysis of the Programme design and interviews with the managing consortia led to the development of a basic 'Logic Model' (see figure 1). It has been argued that a Logic Model provides evaluation researchers with a deceptively simple tool for mapping complex social programme initiatives (Kellogg Foundation, 2001) because it offers a diagrammatic overview of the ways in which a programme is intended, by the designers, to deliver its aims. Working through Logic Model development, and identifying implicit and explicit assumptions, also helps both programme designers and evaluators to identify some of the 'grey areas' and challenges that might lie ahead. By engaging in this process, effective data collection and analysis methods can be developed to assess a programme's impact.

Logic Models, by their very name, imply a comforting degree of rationality and certainty. Yet, the process of creating such models in collaboration with evaluation funders is complex. Over time, as more data become available, Logic Models become increasingly detailed; it is interesting to note, however, that even in the first basic Logic Model developed by the evaluators, critical questions became apparent about a number of key assumptions that appeared to underpin the design of the programme. For example, the programme design appeared to be based on the key assumptions that improved teacher learning would lead directly to a wide range of enhanced pupil outcomes in and beyond physical education, that teachers and schools would be willing to engage in extensive self-evaluation, that schools would be able to fund the higher bills to pay for cover teachers, and that 'cascade' learning to professional colleagues would 'work'. Interestingly, when presented with these assumptions at an early meeting, the managing consortium expressed concern about the realism of some of the outcomes. We return to some of these issues in the discussion.

Figure 1: NATIONAL PE AND SCHOOL SPORT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME – BASIC LOGIC MODEL

YOUR PLANNED WORK ⇒ WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO		YOUR INTENDED RESULTS ⇒ WHAT YOU EXPECT TO HAPPEN		
RESOURCES/INPUTS →	ACTIVITIES →	OUTPUTS →	OUTCOMES →	IMPACT
i.e. positive or negative factors influencing your ability to do your work	i.e. what is done with the resources	i.e. the direct product of activities	i.e. changes in participants' due to Programme	i.e. changes in organisations, communities or systems due to the Programme
Government funding Collaborating partners Others involved (Module/ resource authors, Local Delivery Agencies (LDA) Teacher replacement costs not covered	Modules designed by PE-CPD providers and approved by the National Consortium. Quality assurance (QA) consultant pack to be developed and distributed to all LDAs to (i) guide practice; (ii) ensure consistency; (iii) support tracking and moderation of CPD quality; and (iv) set out the QA process and allocate roles and responsibilities. LDAs to be developed and established within suggested timeframes, audit needs, recruit and offer on-going CPD to trainers and tutors; conduct observation visits to ensure quality in delivery (undertaken by lead trainers); encourage tutors to adopt innovative methodology in their delivery. Resource pack to all schools; Locally based workshops to be delivered based on needs so that individual staff access appropriate modules. Action plan to support implementation and online support to schools. <u>Target:</u> 8500 primary / special and 1200 secondary schools.	Activities delivered to Primary, Special and Secondary schools – as monitored by the National Consortium for each LDA	1. Teachers improve practice to meet pupils' needs; 2. Head teachers and subject leaders (PE coordinators and Heads of PE) better able to recognise and support high quality provision; 3. Increased confidence and ability of staff to disseminate learning to colleagues;	1. Raising the attainment of all pupils; 2. Contributing to whole school improvement; 3. Promoting physical activity and health through high quality PESS; 4. Achieving maximum pupil achievement through innovative interpretation of the NCPE; 5. Enhancing cross-phase continuity to ensure pupil progress

4.2 Selecting case studies and designing case study protocols

Between January 2004 and March 2006, a total of 15 case studies were undertaken. Case studies were based in geographical regions of England, and included both school participants in the Programme and LDA providers. The selected regions were not intended to be nationally representative, instead an attempt was made to reflect different features of the very broad population targeted by the National

Programme (all schools) and to seek 'opportunities to learn' (Stake, 2005, p. 451). Thus, a database on participating local government authorities was created including information on location, types of school, pupil attainment, number of special educational needs pupils, levels of ethnicity and levels of deprivation. Two researchers analysed the database independently and identified local authorities from which LDAs and their schools would be selected. The final selection covered all regions of the country and a range of local authority profiles (inner city, rural, affluent, deprived, etc.).

Within this regional structure, nine of the case studies undertaken were in-depth 'school' case studies that sought to understand how the PE-CPD Programme operated for teachers at the school level. The researchers wanted to find out how modules were selected by schools and teachers, whether and how the 'audit of needs' was undertaken and how effective it was; how teachers experienced the CPD modules they selected and what they learnt from it; and how they sought to cascade learning to peers and change their own practice over time. In addition, six case studies were undertaken at the LDA level. As was noted earlier, LDAs had to deliver CPD within the national framework, but had some flexibility in order to meet specific local needs. In these case studies, the researchers sought to understand how the LDA providers interpreted and delivered the programme and why (See appendix I for further detail on the selected schools and LDAs). The case study protocols were approved by a University ethical committee, and all participants completed consent forms and were guaranteed anonymity in the research reports. Anonymity was particularly important in the case of LDAs who, having won the contracts to 'deliver' the programme for their local areas, were under considerable pressure to adhere to agreed timescales and to demonstrate impact.

The data reported from the nine school case studies were gathered from semi-structured interviews with participating teachers and head teachers (see Appendix II for full interview protocols). In developing the interview protocols, Guskey's (2002) multi-level model was used as a framework to structure in-depth questions about teachers' reactions to CPD participation, changes in teachers' knowledge and practices, pupils' learning (as perceived by the teachers), and any evidence of whole school improvement linked to Programme participation. The case-study protocols were designed to ensure that all the interview schedules were centred on the National PESS-CPD Programme aims, but that the questions were open enough to allow for the participants to raise additional or different issues and concerns. The researchers conducted a total of 20 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with six primary teachers, six head teachers (primary and special schools), four PE specialist teachers (secondary schools), two teachers working in special schools, and two teaching assistants.

A total of six LDA-level case studies were also undertaken. LDAs were required to develop a common structure with specific, named roles comprising of an overall manager, lead trainers and local tutors. Lead trainers were responsible for delivering programme-specific training to the local tutors who were then responsible for much of the delivery to teachers. In the LDA case studies, interviews were undertaken with each of the lead managers, three lead trainers and four local tutors. In line with the Logic Model theoretical framework for this evaluation, in each of the first visits to LDAs, the interviewer explored the assumptions and rationale underpinning the ways in which individual LDAs had decided to organise the national programme in their local area.

4.3 Data analysis

This was an evaluation study, so it was important to analyse the data around the programme aims and in the context of the Logic Models developed both for the national programme and for each case study. Thus, the programme aims provided a framework for the evaluation, and the Logic Models reflected these (see, for example, figure 1). In addition, the use of semi-structured interview schedules ensured that both teachers and CPD providers were able to focus on the issues that were important to them. This offered the potential to extend and deepen the findings beyond merely reporting on each of the programme aims.

Given the qualitative, case study methods used in the evaluation and the overarching framework of the programme aims, it was appropriate to seek to analyse the data taking a dual approach. Thus the data were trawled for findings that specifically related to the programme aims, but were also analysed using a constructivist revision of the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) (Charmaz, 2006) and it is this analysis that is reported in this paper. Data were transcribed and read, leading to a process of progressive coding as advocated by Charmaz. In this process, two researchers reviewed the data and coded to ensure that participants' experiences (positive and negative) of delivering or seeking to learn from the programme were captured. The analysis resulted in four 'themes': 'tailoring provision', 'active and interactive professional learning', 'collective participation', and 'sustained engagement in professional learning?' (see figure 2 for an example of the process leading to two of the themes). The data were then reported both in detailed 'vertical' case reports on single schools and LDAs, and in cross-case thematic analysis. A constructivist version of GTM was considered appropriate given the conceptual framework that was already imposed upon the data by the CPD programme aims. Hence, Charmaz's criterion of 'resonance' was also important as the researchers sought to ensure that the process of

388 focussed coding linked with the programme aims, but also ensured that the
389 participants' broader experiences of learning in the programme were prominent in the
390 findings.

391 Figure 2: *Illustration of the coding process from codes to categories and finally*
392 *'themes' (1 and 3).*

Theme	**Categories**	**Codes**
1. Tailoring provision	a. audit needs	a. reviewing audit practices, working with PDMs, establishing communication links with schools, informal and ongoing interactions with schools, local knowledge.
	b. addressing teachers' priorities	b. adjust / adapt modules, offer more practical experiences, being 'creative' with module content, clarify and address teachers' learning needs and expectations, focus on pupil learning.
3. Collective participation	a. benefits of collective participation	a. sharing language, peer support during implementation, potential for sustained impact, benefits of two or more teachers from the same school working together.
	b. challenges of sharing learning	b. challenges of cascading knowledge, lack of time, lack of opportunity, lack of expertise.

393

394 In the next part of the paper, data are reported in two main sections. In section
395 5.1, data from the first three themes are reported (tailoring provision, active and
396 interactive professional learning, and collective participation) to highlight some of the
397 key successes of the programme design, and the issues that arose as the Programme
398 evolved. In section 5.2, negative findings from theme four (sustained engagement in
399 professional learning?) are reported illustrating the problems teachers encountered in
400 developing and sustaining their learning. Throughout the next section, data extracts
401 from interviews are identified by case study type (school or LDA) and number; and
402 respondent (i.e. teacher).

5.1 Key Successes

Findings

(i) Tailoring provision: auditing to meet local needs

The data from the case studies at both the school and CPD level point to clear evidence that, from the perspective of teachers, head teachers and CPD providers, the National PESS-CPD Programme was a success in many respects. Attendance at Programme modules was rated as a positive learning experience by the majority of teachers in school case studies. Both teachers and CPD providers appreciated the efforts made to tailor the modules to meet teachers' and schools' needs. As one CPD provider argued:

> We are not delivering things that people do not want, we are delivering what people are asking for and I think that has been a real boon. (LDA case study 1, local tutor)

From the teachers' perspectives, it was clear that attending the 'right course' for them was paramount. Data showed that, in the majority of the school cases studies, teachers and head teachers believed that CPD providers had established effective communication links with schools and, as a result, their needs were met:

> The last thing I want to do is to go to a course that has no relevance, no bearing to what I'm doing and where I'm teaching. So, it was really very thoroughly audited of what we [the PE department] wanted. (School case study 2, secondary PE teacher)

On the other hand, the audit process was time consuming and, as the programme evolved, CPD providers found it increasingly difficult to maintain their early audit activities. Initially, for example, the CPD providers administered letters (including the

aims of the Programme, the modules on offer and an audit form to be returned) to all schools in order to identify which of the menu of available modules was likely to be popular. As the Programme evolved, however, the providers relied increasingly on existing information from other sources. However, once teachers were attending a module, the providers enhanced the needs-analysis process by encouraging teachers to explore the reasons for their participation in the module, identify their own learning objectives and think in terms of what they wanted to achieve for their pupils. As one provider explained:

> It is useful to focus teachers on what they are doing with their specific class or with a particular pupil or group of pupils. In this respect, CPD delivery is more focused and there is teacher learning involved. (LDA case study 3, lead trainer)

As a result of strategies such as these, the vast majority of school case study participants interviewed reported that CPD providers 'absolutely listened to us' (school case study 4, head teacher) and created opportunities for them to address their local priorities. Echoing the views of many research participants, one teacher articulated clearly the way in which the 'localised' nature of the Programme implementation was a key feature of its effectiveness:

> These people (CPD providers) know the school, the pupils, know the difficulties of what it means to teach in these schools, with these pupils, in this area. So it makes it a lot more personal and you can come back and actually implement something. (School case study 2, secondary PE teacher)

CPD providers were certainly confident (based on little robust evidence) that they were delivering what was required to meet the Programme aims:

> I think as trainers we've all tried to make them [the modules] as practical as possible as well as addressing the national criteria that we have to deliver to, so yes I think it [the programme] is beginning to help raise standards. (LDA case study 6, lead trainer)

(ii) Active and interactive learning approaches

Teachers welcomed the opportunities offered in the Programme for active participation in the learning process and for sharing ideas, knowledge and experiences with professional colleagues. In this way, as one primary school teacher explained it: 'teachers themselves generate ideas rather than 'just being fed'' (school case study 3). This principle underpinned much of the provision in the national programme:

> I try and involve people, it is not me who is the expert going 'this is how you are going to do it'. It is a sort of sharing situation. (LDA case study 5, CPD manager)

In addition, opportunities for interacting with colleagues were considered to be a crucial design feature supporting teachers' learning. The assumption that underpinned most CPD providers' work was that teachers with different levels of understanding and varied experiences should share their views in order to learn from each other. It was clear that CPD providers used this approach as a deliberate learning strategy. For example, one CPD provider stated that she had the aim to 'bring [together] all teachers' expertise within the CPD module' (LDA case study 1, CPD manager) in order to enhance and deepen understandings. Another provider commented:

> Teacher learning was interactive...teachers talked ….got into small groups and discussed it, exchanged ideas, asked one another their point of view. That has been an important approach. (LDA case study 2, local tutor)

This approach was viewed as one of the most effective features of module delivery by participants:

> I think we did take a lot of ideas from the group, from other people, from other schools that have actually already put some of the ideas in practice. It was good to use some of their ideas. (School case study 7, teaching assistant)

> During the discussion, I could pick up things that other people were saying, I could agree or disagree. As a learner, I got very involved in the process and I learned a lot. (School case study 1, primary teacher)

It was evident that the CPD providers had accepted the suggestions made in the Programme training about active learning as a core feature of effective teacher learning. Certainly there was evidence in all the case studies of teachers being engaged as active, collaborative learners.

(iii) 'Collective participation'

At the beginning of the Programme, CPD providers tended to design module delivery around 'traditional', one-day activities. Delivery dates were pre-determined and individual teachers from different schools were invited to go to a single location in

order to participate. However, during the second year of the programme (2005-2006), CPD providers became increasingly aware of the limitations of this approach and schools were invited to choose between whole-school/department training days or 'traditional' out-of-school one-day courses.

The teachers reported valuing both forms of provision for different reasons. In the traditional out-of-school courses, as previously reported, teachers valued interacting and learning from colleagues from different schools with different experiences and programmes. In addition, teachers from three schools (school case studies 1, 5 and 7) drew attention to the learning potential where two or more teachers from the same school attended a module together. Further to this, whole-school or whole-departmental training was also highly valued (school case studies 2, 3, 4 and 8). Data clearly showed that this 'collective CPD participation' (Garet et al., 2001) led to some very positive learning experiences as teachers developed a shared language and collective frameworks of understanding that they could then use in practice and develop further with their colleagues. As one secondary school PE teacher explained: 'I believe that this is a very positive aspect of the module, for our understanding, that we worked together as a department' (school case study 2).

Particularly notable was the finding that collective participation in modules could form the foundation of subsequent team work and peer support during the challenging post-module implementation phase. In these instances, there was evidence of sustained learning activity. In two secondary schools, where all members of the PE department acknowledged the importance of a specific topic and whole-department training days were offered, teachers reported that the issues explored during those days were still part of the department's discussions a year later, influencing their practices in fundamental ways:

> Every week we meet and we look at practical bits for PE and sport, how to encourage more pupils to get involved and all this came from this module…. The opportunity to share stuff during the module has been so vital that we have continued to do it. (School case study 2, secondary PE teacher)

> Sharing ideas resulted in positive outcomes for the quality of our work and interactions within the department. (School case study 8, secondary PE teacher)

In another example, in one primary school (school case study 1) two teachers who were involved in the same physical activity/health module reported supporting each other to 'make things happen' upon their return to their school:

> Schools are so busy, but in this case we had actually time with Tom [colleague] to think of some things and come back to school and actually do some of these things. And that has been great.

In this school, 12 months after module participation, both teachers reported that they were still 'brainstorming' in order to explore effective ways to engage pupils in physical activity. Importantly, however, although their collective participation enabled them to develop a common strategy, these teachers still struggled to 'present something strong about our plans' to other teachers in their schools. Despite the head teacher's support for the physical activity initiatives they were trying to introduce, most interactions with colleagues were too informal and rushed to lead to effective learning.

Furthermore, one of the participants commented that 'not all teachers share the same passion about healthy, active lifestyles, that is why they did not choose that module….and it is hard for us sometimes'. This example illustrates some of the common problems found with cascading CPD knowledge even in the most promising of circumstances. Certainly for the majority of teachers who participated in modules as the sole representative of their schools, it was challenging enough for them to develop and grow their newly acquired knowledge in practice, let alone to 'cascade' their new knowledge to colleagues.

5.2. Sustained engagement in professional learning

In addition, to the clear strengths of the programme, there were also some fundamental difficulties and many of these were unanticipated by the Programme designers. For example, it became apparent from the case study data that one of the strengths of the national Programme was breadth of provision; i.e. it made available to teachers a wide range of modules on different topics. As a result, most teachers were able to select modules in areas of interest to them. However, data showed that breadth was also a key weakness of the Programme, and that the broad nature of provision prevented teachers from developing their new areas of interest – i.e. depth in learning - either by taking further modules on the same topic or through further supported learning in their school context. Although CPD providers acknowledged the importance of 'follow-up' support, there was no evidence to suggest that they had found workable (and affordable) ways to achieve this in practice. As a consequence, the degree to which teachers continued to learn after the end of module participation seemed to be an individual (and school) matter.

The majority of the teachers interviewed expressed a clear interest in expanding and extending their knowledge on a specific topic and, in this respect, the national Programme failed to live up to their expectations. For example, one secondary school PE teacher argued that, despite gaining interesting insights in a whole-department training activity, and continuing to discuss the content during department meetings (as reported above re school case study 2) they also felt frustrated in their efforts to learn because 'more support, more information about how we can move it on' was required. Similarly, a primary teacher reported that:

> [Although] the content was interesting and stimulating….I would like to attend another module to further study health and body issues. It might sounds similar, but, for me, it would be a step forward. (School case study 1)

Another primary teacher commented eloquently on the importance of external expertise in facilitating and challenging teachers to progress in their learning:

> I would like to construct the knowledge. I would like to start to lead it and see where it goes. But it needs to have some sort of guidance. (School case study 5)

Some teachers suggested the national Programme should have a different structure, with the addition of follow-up support meetings, led by CPD providers and other experts, as a strategy to increase and deepen their understandings:

> I believe that if a course lets you go back to your school and try things, record the impact or keep notes for a,b,c and then go back again and talk about it more….that would make me not

589 forget. I could remember the whole module if it was structured
590 in this way. (School case study 1, primary teacher)

591

592 I came out with lots of ideas, which need time to be
593 implemented and then, maybe it would be useful to go back and
594 say 'I have done this, maybe we could now move on'. (School
595 case study 8, secondary PE teacher)

596 There were two examples in the case studies where the CPD provider attempted to
597 offer follow-up sessions/modules. In the first, the PE department attended a follow-up
598 session, with the aim to support teachers to 'go away with the new knowledge and
599 come back and give feedback about how they worked' (school case study 2, secondary
600 PE teacher). Yet, teachers felt this meeting was not planned in a way that could deepen
601 their understanding of the topic, instead they tended to cover the same material again.
602 In the second example, a CPD provider took the initiative to design and offer a follow-
603 up module in one topic. However, secondary PE teachers reported that they were
604 disappointed with the content:

605 I was disappointed with the second module because it was not
606 related to what we had in the first time, but, having said that, the
607 second module was probably more practical, which was what we
608 wanted. ….But, there was such a wide range of people in the course
609 and this module did absolutely nothing to people who have been
610 teaching and coaching for years, so it failed to address everybody's
611 needs. (School case study 8)

In both cases, the data seemed to suggest that although there was strong teacher interest in increasing depth of learning in areas of interest, and there was some willingness on the part of CPD providers, there was a lack of expertise on how such progression might be facilitated or, indeed, on what it should look like. One CPD provider commented that the national modules were too repetitive to motivate teachers to engage in long-term, sustained, and progressive professional learning. As he put it:

> One of our biggest challenges here is to lock people into longitudinal training and obviously having modules with a lot of repetition was not going to be helpful to us long term. (LDA case study 3, lead trainer)

The issue of depth of learning is an interesting one because it suggests there was a belief amongst the Programme designers that the way to deliver the Programme aims was to offer teachers access to a set of relatively short modules on different topics within physical education. From this viewpoint, it is interesting to consider the different ways in which the teachers were conceptualised as learners in the Programme design, particularly in a changing national context where professional development is to become almost wholly school managed and led.

6. Discussion

The task of the researchers was to find out whether the structures and opportunities provided through the new national PESS-CPD Programme met teachers' needs, and to what extent the ambitious Programme aims were achieved. Data on themes 1-3, as reported above, illustrate numerous ways in which the Programme was received positively by teachers and schools. In particular, where it operated well, the tailoring of module provision through the audit process was regarded as helpful, resulting in module selection and delivery in areas of teacher interest. Although it is important to

remember that the menu of modules made available was pre-determined by the managing consortium, in some respects it can be argued that the Programme met key aspects of Day and Townsend's (2009) four principles of effective professional development: voluntarism, choice, agency and ownership, and control. To this extent, the National PESS-CPD Programme can be regarded as a success and other national CPD initiatives could learn something from it.

Teacher learning initiatives in physical education and school sport (PESS) tend to get rather less press within the general education literature than those in subjects such as maths and science. It is worth highlighting, therefore, that as a direct result of this Programme, a new national infrastructure of CPD providers was established and a suite of partially standardised modules was made available to all teachers (and other adults) engaged in teaching PESS across England. Furthermore, the principle of establishing a national Programme that could be adapted - to some extent - to meet local needs was upheld, there was evidence of increasing local flexibility as the Programme evolved, and teachers were positive about many aspects of provision. It seems clear, therefore, that in these respects at least, the Programme is an example of successful implementation.

It could be argued, however, that the successes of the Programme also exposed some weaknesses and these can be explained, partially, by an analysis of the learning theories, or perhaps the 'folk theories' of learning (Bereiter, 2002) underpinning the Programme design. Some of these theories were revealed in the initial Logic Model created in the early stages of the evaluation with the managing consortium, while others became apparent as the Programme evolved. The key issue is that although the Programme aims were very ambitious, expressing great expectations for teacher learning, pupil learning and whole

school improvement, and an attempt was made to ground the Programme in an understanding of teachers as learners, the model of teacher learning that emerged through the programme activities was, at times, both contradictory and limiting.

We would argue that one of the main flaws in this, as in other CPD programmes, was its fractured understanding of teachers as learners. Falk (2001, p. 137) claimed that 'professional learning is *the* job of teaching' and Armour (2010) among others, has suggested that teachers could benefit from considering themselves as, primarily, learners rather than as teachers. These views seem to resonate with Hodkinson, Biesta and James (2008) and Hager and Hodkinson (2009) who theorise learning as a holistic process of 'becoming':

> this entails understanding learning as social and embodied…thus when a learner constructs or reconstructs knowledge or skills, they are also reconstructing themselves…That is, people become through learning and learn through becoming whether they wish to do so or not, and whether they are aware of the process or not. (p.633)

Central to this view is the understanding that learners do not 'become' to a fixed endpoint and that 'learning is never complete' (ibid). This sits well with Dewey's (1958) argument about the centrality of experience in learning, and about the quality of learning experiences; i.e. if teachers are engaged in impoverished learning experiences over a long period of time they are likely to become deskilled as learners. Claxton's (2007) arguments about building learning capacity are similar, because each CPD experience should build learning capacity for the next, resulting in learners who 'become different and move beyond where they are' (Greene, 1995, p. 13). These

views explain why CPD Programmes that are built around "disconnected topics" (Elmore, 2002, p. 10) are likely to result in limited learning (Ball & Cohen, 1999).

In the National PESS-CPD programme, the case studies offer clear evidence of limits to learning progression as the teachers sought to develop their emerging interests. It would appear, therefore, that the Programme was built around a learning model whereby it was anticipated that teachers would *learn* (something specific) and then *teach* or *implement* what was learnt. In a sense, therefore, while it was recognised by the Programme designers that further learning *support* was desirable (in the original Programme design it was anticipated that e-learning communities would develop) to ensure teachers could 'implement' their learning in practice, the designers did not anticipate that teachers would also 'become' increasingly interested *learners* in the module topics. Hence, teachers were enthused by the learning approach taken in the modules, especially the pre-module audit and the active learning approach, but then frustrated as they sought to deepen their learning in areas of interest. It could be argued, therefore, that although strenuous attempts were made to develop teachers as active and collaborative *learners* in the CPD modules, the underpinning theory was contradictory in that there was an implicit assumption that they would revert to being *teachers* who *delivered* learning to pupils (or *cascaded* it to colleagues) once they returned to the school setting. Moreover, in the changing policy context in the UK, where schools will be increasingly expected to lead all professional development for teachers, this conceptualisation of teachers as teachers - rather than primarily as *lead learners* - will become increasingly inadequate.

Pedder, James and Macbeath (2005, p.237) argued that where schools are expected to take responsibility for teachers' professional development, a number of factors need to be in place:

> Classrooms need to become crucibles of learning for teachers as much as for their students. In order to develop classrooms in this way, teachers, their pupils and their schools, together with local and central government need to accept responsibility for developing and restructuring teaching and learning roles and relationships within them.

In their research on teacher professional learning in and out of the school workplace, these authors found that schools were 'highly conducive to teachers' learning out of the classroom but rather less amenable to teachers learning with colleagues in the classroom' (ibid, p. 236). Nonetheless, these researchers concluded that despite its challenges, learning with colleagues as part of their day-to-day teaching activities is 'indispensable' in the quest to raise the quality of educational provision. These views are similar to that of Timperley (2008) who argued that professional development programmes are likely to have limited impact on teacher and pupil learning where they are incongruent with the specific contexts of practice. Certainly, the new PESS-CPD Programme attempted to locate a nationally determined set of modules in the contexts of schools, but it also failed to support teachers who were stimulated by the Programme to develop as learners.

Looking back on the national PESS-CPD programme, therefore, it could be argued that what was needed was the view of learning proposed by Hager and Hodkinson (2009, p. 635) as one of 'becoming within a transitional process of boundary crossing'. Wayne, Suk Yoon et al. (2008) suggest there is still very little

CPD available that supports teachers to be active, lifelong learners and as James, McCormick, et al. (2007, p.63) have noted, 'continuous and progressive professional development' is likely to be most effective for teachers. It is also clear that teachers will find it difficult to engage pupils as lifelong learners if they, themselves, are not similarly engaged. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) conclude their overview of research on professional development as follows:

> When schools support teachers with well-designed and rich professional development, those teachers are able to create the same types of rigorous and engaging opportunities for students – a foundation for student success in school and beyond. (p. 52)

What this means is that in order to achieve its expectations for pupil learning and whole school improvement, the National PESS-CPD Programme should have been founded on an understanding of teachers as continuous, lifelong learners. As such, it might be argued that the Programme design would have looked rather different, possibly offering longitudinal modules that could support teachers, as learners, to continue to pursue their evolving interests. Certainly these findings suggest that in a new era of CPD for teachers in the UK, where schools are being encouraged to take the lead in the CPD requirements of their staff, an opportunity exists for teachers to develop areas of interest in ways that the national programme appears to have inhibited. On the other hand, as Pedder, James and Macbeath (2005) found, schools may find it challenging to access the expertise they need to support progressive teacher learning.

At its core, most professional development policy and practice reflects core societal beliefs about the nature of teachers, and teaching as a profession. In this

respect, teaching is a somewhat curious profession in that its primary clients are children and young people. Whereas most other recognised professions have youth branches or specialities within a wider professional body, teaching is focussed exclusively on its young clients. This might partially explain why, as was noted earlier, teaching has struggled at times, to gain full recognition in comparison to some of the more established professions such as medicine or law (Hargreaves, Cunningham et al., 2007). This relatively low status might also explain why, in this programme, members of the physical education profession (broadly conceived) agreed to even attempt to deliver the largely unrealistic aims of the programme solely through a menu of CPD modules. A more confident professional group might have challenged such aims.

7. Conclusion

This paper has reported data from the evaluation of an innovative national CPD programme for teachers in England. The programme was designed to take account of some of the existing research on teachers' professional learning, and key design features included a pre-module audit of learning needs for teachers and schools, and an active and collaborative approach to learning within modules. 'Collective participation' (Garet et al., 2001) was also highly valued by teachers. It was recognised that sustained learning support would be beneficial for teachers' learning post-module engagement, but this proved impossible to deliver in practice. The programme was regarded as successful and interesting by participants in this research, and it clearly generated some enthusiasm for learning, although it failed to support teachers to extend their learning in areas of interest.

Jarvis (2009, p. 32) has argued that most theories of learning lack credibility because they are based on 'an incomplete theory of the person' and Hager and

Hodkinson (2009, p. 620) have claimed that 'learning is more fruitfully viewed as an ongoing process rather than a series of acquisition events'. Both these views are illustrated in the CPD programme analysed in this paper. The evaluation findings suggest, therefore, that the theory of learning employed in the Programme was both incomplete and inconsistent, and that although teachers were offered a broad range of interesting learning activities, they were unable to grow this learning in practice. This suggests that if schools are to take an increasing lead in professional development, as advocated by the UK government and supported by much CPD research, further consideration will be needed about the ways in which teachers are conceptualised as lead professional learners in the school setting. Certainly the research reported here supports the notion that all parties can benefit (researchers, programme designers and users) from engaging in an early collaborative analytical process to explore implicit and explicit learning theories underpinning CPD programmes, and (importantly) their consequences. This conceptual development phase could offer one way of ensuring that Guskey and Yoon's (2009) vision of CPD as 'an inquiry-based profession' becomes a reality.

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